

TIMOR SEA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

South China Sea ruling puts spotlight on Australia's untenable position in the Timor Sea

The response from Australia's foreign minister, Julie Bishop, to the ruling from the Permanent Court of Arbitration against China highlights a central contradiction in Australia's foreign policy.

The Timor Sea Justice Campaign's spokesperson, Tom Clarke, said whilst well intentioned, the Australian Government's calls for China to respect international law would continue to ring hollow while Australia itself was failing to abide by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

"The Australian Government has turned it's back on the independent umpire so it can short-change East Timor out of billions of dollars in oil and gas revenue," said Mr Clarke.

Due to the Australian Government's refusal to establish permanent maritime boundaries with East Timor, the tiny nation has taken the dispute for 'compulsory conciliation' at the United Nations – the first time this particular process has ever been initiated.

"If Australia wants China to stop being a regional bully and to respect international law, than we need to look at our own behavior towards East Timor and start playing by the rulebook ourselves. Ignoring the independent umpire so we can short-change one of the poorest country in Asia is pretty shameful," said Mr Clarke.

For further comments, please contact: Tom Clarke in Geneva on +41 797 590 448 or Vannessa Hearman in Sydney on 0407 023 672.

A fair go for East Timor.